

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

### 1.—A MAN-EATING TIGER OF THE KOLLEGAL DISTRICT, SOUTH INDIA.

On this occasion—August 1947—I failed to kill the tiger, but can say with certainty that his dentition is much the same as that of the Nelliampathies animal over two hundred miles further south (Vol. 47, p.148). There was every expectation that the S.W. Monsoon would as usual give little rain to the Minniam valley, which is protected by the Biligirirangan Hills as is the Bhavani valley by the Nilgiris. Most unfortunately this was an unusually heavy monsoon and that saved the tiger.

There are five or more tigers in the valley and the surrounding hills but there was no useful information, sex or anything else, as to identity of the beast which had killed two herdsmen in January 1946, another man in April and a woman on 3rd July.

Having pitched camp near Minniam village and obtained two cows (people in South India raise no objection to use of cattle as 'baits' and readily supply old and useless dry cows—at a price!) one was picketed 2 miles south and the other 4 miles east. Tigers and panthers of the area seem to slay about four animals a week—they did during my stay, and as the herdsmen at once raise a tremendous uproar to drive the beast away, and the chamars and other harijans—there are 30 houses of these in Minniam village—skin the slain cattle and cut up the carcases, the tigers know there will be nothing left and have acquired the habit of not returning to such 'kills'.

This I discovered after a fruitless all-night vigil over a lovely young snow-white cow slain about mid-day on the 2nd August. On the night of 3rd the east bait was taken by a panther which I failed to slay owing mostly to a great thunderstorm early in the evening—the precursor of a number of such, which soaked me through and through. Fortunately the weather was warm (valley elevation 1900 ft.) and all of my clothing, also the blanket draped over me was of wool. Why I did not get the shot I should have had would take too much space. We must get to the tiger.

The place for the south cow was selected after arrival in camp on 30th July because of fresh tracks of a tiger and tigress in bed of the ravine, a good approach to tree selected for machan chair, and a convenient root for the tethering wire rope: also there was water for the poor cow. Having got out of wet clothes on the morning of 5th August a visit to the ancient cow showed that a male tiger had passed up the ravine early in the day within twelve feet of the bait without molesting it. Experience taught the tiger would return that night or the next and take the offered dinner. He was evidently a wary animal, similar to a number of others like him which I have defeated from time to time, and some others which have defeated me.

That night I could not be in the machan, which had been fully prepared since 30th July, as all my kit had to be dried. Next morning it was found the tiger had not returned. Now it was certain he would return this night—the night of the 6th.

It was not known if he was the wanted animal, and as an immense storm gathered at the head of the valley and I felt certain of a shot on the following night should he kill the cow, I did not occupy the machan. That, over-confidence and the seeming certainty of a tremendous deluge saved the tiger. Alas! the storm miraculously worked away to the west and gave but little rain to that valley and ravine. In the morning—7th—it was found that the tiger had attacked the poor cow and been unable to kill it. Marks on the neck showed want of effective canine teeth, and claws were evidently none too good. The cow's off stifle had been munched and the skin broken, but the flesh only gnawed and not eaten. Return of the tiger seemed a certainty; hope was high and there would be no rain.

Before 3.45 p.m. all was quiet. At 5 o'clock a tremendous roar a long hundred yards down the ravine was followed at intervals by other similar loud, angry demonstrations five or six times repeated up to six o'clock when a last one of less volume from a slightly altered direction; and then complete silence. I have known tigers returning to 'kills' growl and grumble, but never experienced such a noisy animal as this. It was suspected in the morning that he was not far away and maybe knew that men had looked at the cow, also, perhaps he may have heard me getting up the rope ladder and settling into the machan; and he may have got my wind as the slight air movement down the ravine was in his favour. Anyhow he was not behaving in a normal way: perhaps he was following his experience with timid herdsman. The one unavoidable defect of this selected place was that it was possible for the tiger to be within hearing distance of it.

All previous tracks had been along the other, the right side of the ravine bed. Now, just after dark, I thought I heard a slight click of a stone on my side. Nothing further during the night and no approach to the cow.

In the morning it was found the tiger had come up the left side and had actually stood almost beneath my machan on a small patch of sand. Why he did not go the further thirty feet to the cow will never be known. Maybe he saw the cow to be alive and knew he could not kill it; previously he had not shied off taint of men in the nala; the machan was well screened and high up; I was quite silent and had not eaten for fear of any slight sounds reaching microphone ears. Padded chair arms, padded foot rest and shooting bar, all clothes of wool; he could not have detected my presence, and had he done so would not have ventured beneath me.

I entirely removed the machan and placed it in a more distant tree but on nights of 8th and 9th he did not return. The cow was still alive. On the 10th news came of a cow in grazing herd killed two miles further up the ravine. This was the work of a normal tiger and I had another fruitless vigil. Two days later severe conjunctivitis in the right eye and increasingly bad weather decided

me to break camp and own defeat on this occasion both as to the tiger and a rogue elephant 12 miles to the west. Just as well, for the infection passed with doubled force to the other eye and heavy rain storms were almost incessant.

It was a great disappointment as I had hoped to view this beast's skull on my then closely approaching 79th birthday. Perhaps I may have him during the next few months if he still lives.

Tigers take to killing of human beings for several reasons or causes, one of which is approaching old age and defective teeth. But it is curious that in both these instances the killings were so few and so widely spaced. And why should teeth of only one tiger in the area be so defective? Want of calcium? If that was the cause, it would affect other tigers also. Perhaps it does, but the animals killing cattle showed no sign of bad teeth.

It is a great pity the skull of the Nelliampathies tiger was lost in transit to Bombay at the end of March as expert examination of the skull would have afforded interesting information.

BANGALORE.

December 24, 1947.

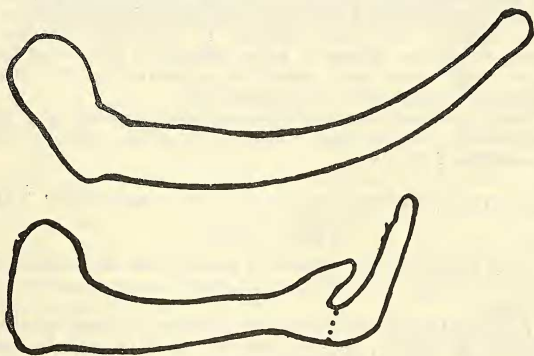
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## 2.—ABNORMAL CLAVICLE BONES IN TIGERS

*(With text figures)*

I enclose exact size sketches of a pair of clavicles removed from a 9'-2" tiger shot by myself here on April 22nd. Note the



(Actual size)

malformed one, which bears obvious signs of a previous fracture at the point marked with a dotted line.

HONNAMETTI ESTATE,  
ATTIKAN P.O.,  
VIA MYSORE (S. INDIA).  
May 4, 1948.

R. C. MORRIS